



Laverstock & Ford Parish Council

Mr S W Hannath – Clerk

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Dear Sir

This parish stands by the comments made to you in previous correspondence. Regarding the inspection of the draft Core Strategy we would wish to add the following comments on specific issues.

Issue 2: Evidence supporting Revised Housing and Employment Figures

Our view is that the Core strategy is unsound. The original number of homes planned by RSS at 12400 was arbitrary and incapable of being delivered. The meeting in Salisbury at the start of the Core Strategy process, where Parish Councils were asked to identify sites where this number of housing could be placed, evidenced that planners had very little idea as to where to position that number of houses. Our Parish was never consulted on the outcome of this meeting and we were left with a 500 housing site at Hampton Park which was very much against the prevailing local view. Had we been consulted Longhedge would have been put forward as a site that is well suited to development for such a large number of homes. The Hampton Park site was rejected unanimously by the Wiltshire Strategic Planning Committee at its meeting on the 16th February 2011. The Wiltshire Councillors deemed this site inappropriate for 500 homes, an intrusion into the rural landscape and were most anxious to retain the Strategic gap that separates the two Parish communities of Hampton Park and the Village of Ford.

We are now faced with a reduced number of houses to 9900 and a reduction in jobs to 10,400. This clearly shows that the numbers first quoted were simply unrealistic and the latest numbers, similarly, are no more than plucking figures from the air. It has been suggested that the original housing number was arrived at by considering the number of affordable homes required and simply multiplying up from the 40% base!

Old Sarum Industrial Park currently has large areas unoccupied and would therefore question the employment numbers as being accurate and objective. Current building rates and occupation rates at Old Sarum cast doubt upon the current housing numbers required. We do not believe that the Core Strategy should be founded upon aspirational statements.

Ron Champion

Chairman
Laverstock and Ford Parish Council

Cllr. McLennan:

The Parish of Laverstock & Ford comprises four communities, an element of a fifth and a proposal for a 6th. Laverstock, Ford, Old Sarum & Hampton Park are the communities, with an element of Milford making the 5th, although Laverstock usually includes this element within Laverstock. Longhedge is open farm land over the field from Old Sarum development and extending to the furthest northern extent of the L&F parish boundary.

It is clear from the Laverstock & Ford parish Plan, which has been in existence for a couple of years at least, that the overwhelming view of every one of these communities is that they are content to be near Salisbury but not be in or swamped by Salisbury. Equally, a major factor was the demand for the local representatives to preserve the green space, wherever possible, as the preservation of a farming outlook at the root of the community, was seen as the reason for being in the parish in the first place. Our green space also offers Salisbury a real alternative to City life and easily accessible.

To achieve these ends, we have all worked to improve links for cycling, walking and horse riding throughout the parish. It is possible to do all these things from the top to the bottom of the parish. The acquisition of land in Laverstock has encouraged the formation of a Community farm, which has literally hundred's of volunteers and thousands of visitors, mostly on foot. I use these as illustrations of the elected representatives all working to achieve the aims of the Parish Plan.

Now the past and present development detail, starting with Longhedge. Longhedge has an allocation of 450 dwellings with another '350 in reserve'. This will be a 'slither' apart from Old sarum, whose community will effectively increase from circa 160 dwellings, prior to the last Local Plan, to over 850 once the 674 Persimmon dwellings are built. This would approach Laverstock's (the principal community of the parish) 1150 dwellings, which was 1000 before the last Local Plan.

The Longhedge allocation would bring a total of 1300 dwellings in the north of the parish, where only 5 years ago, 160 stood.

The 'reserve 350', if called upon, as inevitably one day it would, if the first allocation is made, increases the grand total to 1650 dwellings in the north of the parish.

The question then becomes one of need and infrastructure. There is no doubt that L&F Parish has no need for these dwellings, as it prefers the farm land, has no need for infrastructure and our local residents would have no claim to live in the properties, unlike other parishes, who are encouraged to offer up land in return for 'local people's housing'.

The 'one party vote' at Wiltshire Council has got us to this point. (I am not of that party, so have no inside links, unlike Netherhampton Road, perhaps).

This vote has led to the removal of Netherhampton Road site – ideal for a migration of Salisbury businesses from Churchfields to the next closest site. This site was removed because Harnham residents (not locals) were whipped up to write a letter. Lo and behold this site suddenly gets removed.

Result? A huge allocation of Employment land at Longhedge – 8-10 hectares in addition to the existing employment allocation at Old Sarum (not one brick laid) and the existing Industrial estate at Old Sarum Airfield, where units lay empty and the one heavy industry is now being taken to court owing to a new local resident complaining of noise from the industrial site. The noise was there long before the residents, so how can that be omitted from any housing planning requirement in the first instance?

All these employment allocations, in a place not best liked by many businesses, will serve to create a new eyesore and Churchfields look-alike, simply because Planners dump all their eggs in one parish, for expedience.

Back to the houses at Longhedge and you now have another reason to doubt the wisdom of all that employment alongside and surrounding all those houses. Residents complain and business suffers.

Lorries and homes do not mix and this is proven not to be the most sought after site for businesses and housing.

Back to the Housing allocation and the fact that no new houses are required here, as of the 674 in the Local Plan, approximately only 250 are occupied six years later and over 400 yet to be built. Those that are being built are being rented by the MOD for TEMPORARY Army accommodation or are being 'given away' before the other sites in Salisbury commence building, as the developer knows that this is the least favoured site of all.

Should this barmy, easy to make, decision of the Core Strategy be upheld, then 450 dwellings would not be enough to provide a proper school and create a new village. 800 would be too many. 600 probably about right. A new village with all infrastructure must then be the outcome. The development at Old Sarum already has exhausted the local facilities. e.g. the school is too small to accommodate the community once totally occupied.

Longhedge versus Hampton Park Extension

I represent Ford, which is the opposite side of the airfield and visible from Old Sarum/Longhedge. Adjacent to Ford is Bishopdown Farm land which currently separates Ford from Hampton Park (Still in the L&F parish). This strategic gap separating the two communities also has a callous allocation of 500 dwellings and an existing allocation of a new retail park, which falls partly in the parish. If the allocation of business and housing at Longhedge is permitted, alongside the existing allocation of Old Sarum and in addition the proposed allocation in the Strategic Gap, then this would create a virtually continuous concreting over of the L&F Parish from The fields of Longhedge through to the city – Bishopdown farm. Bishopdown farm (300 dwellings) was also in the parish of L&F until built, then the parish was told that the housing meant their councillors could not cope with the load, so best to move the parish boundary.

I request that the Inspector looks at what is being done by the planners, to one parish (which is in Southern Community Area, not Salisbury) and request that all allocations be viewed holistically and the detriment to the wishes of the residents taken fully into account.

At best, all allocations should be removed and let developers come and stake their claim. Any offer would be viewed properly, with the effect on the communities, an integral measurement, unlike the current Core Strategy offering, which shows no consideration for us at all.

L&F parish has always recognised the proximity to Salisbury and the need to play a part. Last Local Plan – 800 dwellings and employment.

Enough is enough. L&F parish does not need or desire 450 or 850 at Longhedge, 8 or 10 hectares of employment at Longhedge and a further 500 dwellings at Hampton park 'extension' into the strategic Gap.

These allocations, coupled with the Local Plan allocations, yet to be built, would literally double the dwellings in the Parish and provide no rights for our own residents at all. It would also make our Parish Plan worthless in the face of hungry planners, who care not.

I was asked why I opposed the Core strategy when we needed a strategy to ensure we had a proper say in where housing and employment is allocated. Having read the above, I expect you know the answer! We could not be any worse off, if the planners actually tried to do damage to our lives and aspirations for our communities.

Stuff the Core Strategy and its vindictive allocations in the Parish of Laverstock & ford.

Thank you.

I will not attend the hearing, as I have had enough of Core Strategies and Local Plans!

Ian

Cllr Ian McLennan